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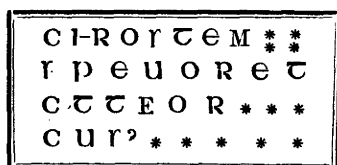
The following memorandum respecting some ancient Inscriptions in Scotland, by Mr. John Ramsay, of Heading Hill, Aberdeen, was read.

“ Towards the end of January last, my attention was directed to an inscription on a portion of what was once the cross of St. Vigean, a parish of Forfarshire, contiguous to that of the town of Arbroath. Through the medium of a friend, I was permitted to inspect a handsome lithograph of this interesting monument of antiquity, executed, I understand, under the auspices of Patrick Chalmers, Esq., of Auldbar, a gentleman not less skilled than zealous in archæological pursuits. The cross referred to is thus mentioned in the *Statistical Account of the Parish of St. Vigean* (1845), written by the parochial clergyman, the Rev. John Muir: ‘ In the churchyard there formerly stood a large cross over the grave of some person of eminence, richly carved in hieroglyphical figures of the kind found on sepulchral stones in some other places of Scotland. The cross has been long ago demolished, but the stalk remains, *with characters at the base hitherto undeciphered.*’

“ I entirely concur in the opinion of the reverend writer, that the cross in question was monumental. Such sepulchral monuments were common about the period to which the cross of St. Vigean seems to belong. A comparison of some of its ornaments with those of other crosses of the same kind, suggests that it was the production of the latter part of the tenth century. The peculiar and beautiful interlacy in the compartment immediately above the inscription, and on one of the *faces* of the cross, is of kindred character with that which is exhibited in similar monuments of the same era, sketches of which are given in Mr. Petrie’s valuable *Essay on the Ecclesiastical Architecture of Ireland*. I observe that it is stated, in the *Account* of the parish already referred to, that St. Vigean lived in the latter part of the tenth century; and that he had his residence in the neighbourhood of the spot where the cross formerly stood. ‘ His original chapel and hermitage were at

Grange of Conan, where there are a small grove, and foundations of a chapel, and also a most copious fountain, which preserves his name. Three or four acres of land contiguous to these are by tradition held as belonging to the chapel.'

" May it not, then, be not unreasonably inferred, that this monument marked the place of St. Vigean's sepulture? This, of course, is merely a conjectural suggestion,—at all events the cross is evidently the monument of some person of distinction. Of the personal history of this saint I know nothing; but I think it not improbable, that he was of Irish origin or connexion. From the similarity to like monuments in Ireland, of the cross referred to, and of others in Forfarshire, and the adjoining districts, not to mention the round towers at Abernethy and Brechin, it is evident that *Irish* missionaries were intimately connected with those parts. The inscription, according to my copy of it is as follows :



" The above inscription appears to be partly in the old Irish, and partly in the Roman character. I take the alphabet of the former from *Armstrong's Gaelic Dictionary*. This mixed character of the inscription is quite common in monuments belonging to a period prior to the distinctive fixation of alphabets, established in later times, particularly after the introduction of printing. Supposing, as is not improbable, that the *aboriginal* alphabets of Britain and Ireland had been lost sight of in the darkness attendant on social convulsion, so remarkably coincident either with the extermination of the order, or the decay of the influence, of the pagan priesthood; a renewed acquaintance with the use of letters was only to be derived from *two* sources, either from the Romans, or from the early Christian missionaries.

“ Hence, I believe, it comes to pass, that the *most ancient* native inscriptions in *Britain* (see *Borlase*) are in the Roman character. Subsequently, some letters were borrowed from the Greek, by the Christian missionaries, owing to their acquaintance with the original language of the New Testament. In all writings and inscriptions, then, of the earlier mediæval times, we may naturally expect a mixture of Roman and Greek characters. Hence, the strong similarity of the old Irish to the old Anglo-Saxon.

“ This premised, I proceed further to observe, that the inscription above noted seems to be only *part* of that which originally belonged to the cross of St. Vigean. I conjecture, for reasons which will afterwards more clearly appear, that the *first* part must have been cut on the *top* of the cross, above the interlacery, which is now lost. It was not unusual to divide such inscriptions into two parts. An instance of such arrangement is to be found in *Borlase’s Antiquities of Cornwall*, pp. 399, 400. Further, in monuments of the age to which the cross of St. Vigean belongs, the *beginning* of the inscription was usually prefixed with a small cross, either so (+), or so (⊕); but this is wanting in the portion of the inscription referred to. Taking all these circumstances into account, I venture to *re-store* the inscription (for it has evidently *suffered*) as follows :

C I-R O I T E M P U
 r D E U O R E T
 E T T E O R P R O
 C U I A N I M A;

that is, using Roman capitals :

C H R O S. T E M P U
 S. D E V O R E T
 E T. T E. O R. P R O
 C U I A N I M A.

“ I do not pretend to give the *original letters* or *contractions*, which time or accident seems to have effaced from the

inscription. It is impossible to determine what selection the stone-cutter may have made in his drafts on the Roman and Irish alphabets. At all events, he must have so managed matters, as to confine his work within the prescribed limits.

“ I translate the above as follows :

“ ‘ *O ! Cross ! Time may destroy thee, too ! Pray for his* (the person named in the *first* part of the inscription) *soul !* ’ ”

“ Now, there is a singularity in this inscription : the first word (*Chros*) is *Gælic*, and the rest are *Latin*. How may this be accounted for ? The *ancient* *Gælic* term for a cross is *cross*. The *vocative* is formed by *aspirating* the nominative into *chros*. To write the Latin *crux* with the *Irish* character was *impossible*. The alphabet has no *x*, and the sound of this letter is foreign to the *Gælic* language. Hence, instead of *Saxenach*, we have *Sassenach*. Thus there was an obvious *necessity* for using the vocative of the *Gælic* word, *cross*.

“ I conjecture that, as was usual in such cases, the first part of the inscription contained the name of the person to whose memory the cross was erected. Thus, the part above deciphered would be a very natural sequence. It is marked by all that touching simplicity which is characteristic of inscriptions on monuments of the same era, noticed by Mr. Petrie, whose accurate and tasteful researches have thrown so much light on some of the darkest and most interesting points of *Gælic* antiquities.

“ Of the devices, animals, &c., on the back of the cross, I shall not here speak, as my present business is with the inscriptions. Suffice it to say, that I think I could *prove* that some of these devices are borrowed from monuments, still extant in Scotland, the age of which exceeds that of the cross by many centuries.

“ The next inscription which I shall notice is that on an ancient monument in the Church of Fordun. Fordun is a parish of Kincardineshire, the county immediately north of Forfarshire. Kincardineshire is sometimes called the Mearns,

and its people, 'the men of the Mearns.' In the old Irish Annals they are called '*Viri na Moerne*.' There are many interesting particulars connected with the parish of Fordun. John de Fordun, author of the *Scotichronicon*, was either a native of it, or resided there, when he wrote his History of Scotland. It was the native parish of George Wishart the Scottish martyr; of the eccentric Lord Monboddo; and of Beattie, author of 'the Minstrel.' Further, it was the *locale* of the famous shrine of St. Palladius. The remains of *Paldy* Chapel are still standing; there is still *Paldy*, or *Pady* Fair; and there is a well in the minister's garden, called St. Palladius' Well. Some will have it, that the famous Saint actually lived, died, and was buried here. I am not sufficiently acquainted with our early ecclesiastical history to give any opinion on the subject; but I am disposed to agree with those who think that Pady Chapel was built, not by the Saint, but by some of his Irish disciples, who came to this part of Scotland, probably with some of his relics. His mission certainly was to Ireland, '*ad Scotos in Christum credentes*.' The earlier Christian churches in this quarter were certainly *Columban*; but some may have been of *Ninian*, or *Palladian* origin. Even at the early period referred to, the spirit of ecclesiastical rivalry seems to have been at work. At all events the chapel of St. Palladius was always accounted the mother church of the Mearns.

"But to come to the matter in hand: the ancient monument to which I refer (some account of which was first given by the late Professor Stuart, of Marischal College, Aberdeen), was first observed upon taking down the old *church* of Fordun, some sixty years ago. 'It had been placed horizontally as a base for the pulpit to rest on, and was considered of so little consequence, as to be thrown aside for many years into the old chapel of St. Palladius, hard by.' This old church of Fordun was so old, that it was *new roofed* about 360 years ago. After lying neglected for a long time, the old stone attracted the

attention of the parish minister, who had it cleaned, and a drawing of it taken. The material is a very coarse free-stone. The dimensions, five feet one inch in length, by two feet eleven inches broad, thickness fully four inches. It is carved on one side only. The emblematical devices are three figures on horse-back, a greyhound, a wild boar, a serpent, or dragon ; and the peculiar *spectacle* device

like that on other old monuments in the north of Scotland. To these I do not refer at present ; my business being with the inscription. Professor Stuart makes it probable that this monument commemorates the assassination of King Kenneth III., in the year 994. His Majesty is said, by our historians, to have been assassinated at the instigation of Finelè, “daughter,” says the Professor, “of Cruchnè, Maormor of Angus.” This should be *the Cruithne* (Pictish) Maormor of Angus. The royal residence was at Kincardine. In the neighbourhood are *Strath-Finella* and *Den-Finella*. In this case, history is confirmed by tradition and topographical etymology. A drawing of the fragmentary inscription will be found in the *Archæologia Scotica*, vol. ii. p. 315.

“There has been another line, if not more, above what remains, and I do not pretend to be able to decipher that with certainty ; but it strikes me that it *looks* like *Kenkardin* or *Kinkardin*, the name of the royal residence. It is to be observed that the *costume* of the human figures on this monu-

ment is exactly the *same* as that of the only human figure on the cross of St. Vigean, belonging, as I conjecture, to the same period.

“ The next inscription which I shall notice is that on one old monument which was found some years ago in the parish of Insch, Aberdeenshire. The dimensions of the stone are six feet by one foot eight inches. The inscription runs along the central *length* of the stone. It is—

ORATE PRO ANIMA RADULFI SACERDOTIS :

This is evidently :

Orate pro Anima Radulphi Sacerdotis.

The characters shew the influence of Anglo-Saxonism at the period when the monument was executed. There are good grounds for believing, that it was placed over the grave of *Radulph*, Bishop of Aberdeen, who died in 1247.

“ I have been induced to give the above specimens of ancient inscriptions in Scotland, in the hope that they may incite the able and zealous archæologists of Ireland to direct their attention to the subject. There are other inscriptions in this country of, perhaps, greater interest, to which I forbear to refer; partly because I confess my entire ignorance of their nature, and partly because I believe they have already attracted the notice of members of your Academy, from whom, if from any, the interpretation of those inscriptions may be expected.

“ Between the antiquities of Ireland, and those of the north of Scotland, there are many points of interesting connexion. The aborigines of both countries belonged to the same great family of the human race; both remained *almost* equally intact by the ambition of ancient Rome; neither had to bow the neck to the yoke of the old Saxons; both were harassed by the Danes; and while the Picts were compelled, partially, to succumb to warriors of Irish descent, it was to missionaries

of Irish origin that they owed their first acquaintance with the Gospel of Peace ! In both countries are still to be found many memorials of aboriginal times, which had once their resemblances in England, but which have there disappeared under “ the tramlings of three conquests,” and the march of modern improvement. I refer, particularly, to those remote times when Druidism bore its mystic sway. Its usages yet linger in customs of popular superstition, although oblivion has long since fallen on the meaning attached to them by a crafty, powerful, and domineering hierarchy. Many an age has passed since its oracles became dumb ; but the nomenclature of its religious creed is still employed to express, by the unwitting Gael of the present day, some of the mysteries of his purer faith ! We have still the mysterious “ temple,” with its massive “ cromlech,” the poetry of the solitary moor, and seldom-trodden height,—many of which have been protected by our landed proprietors, with commendable feeling, disregarding not the protest against eviction of those *adscripta glebæ*, and refusing to abandon to

‘ Hands more rude than wintry winds,’

relics which have braved the buffetings of countless storms.”

Mr. Petrie remarked, that he thought the Academy should feel great pleasure at every effort made by the Scottish antiquarians to illustrate their antiquities, which were so intimately connected with those of Ireland ; and that they should be grateful to Mr. Ramsay for communicating to their Institution his very ingenious attempt to decipher and explain the remarkable inscription at St. Vigean’s.

Mr. Petrie regretted, however, being obliged to state, that he could not, by any means, concur either in Mr. Ramsay’s reading of this inscription, or his conclusions as to its age. He did not believe that there were any abbreviations of words, or varieties of language or alphabetic writing, in it, such as